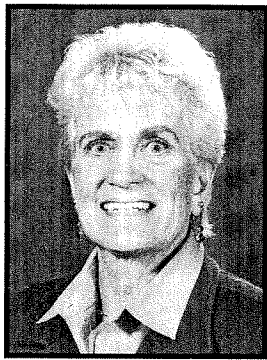


Hammerstrom's

for the people
in the 17th Senate District

Hotline



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May 12, 2003



SENATE SAVES K-12 EDUCATION OPERATIONAL FUNDING. The Senate is making steadfast progress in cutting administrative costs for K-12 education by passing two bills giving local school districts flexibility in their operating budgets. Legislation was recently sent to the House that streamlines the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) and allows individual districts to decide if they desire to eliminate professional development requirements. Currently, data submitted by schools is submitted to CEPI and numerous other state agencies. Senate Bill 365 requires that all data submissions will be made directly to CEPI. Senate Bill 366 allows each individual school district to decide if they want to eliminate teacher development requirements. The Senate Fiscal Agency has reported that districts could save between \$35 and \$40 million alone by not having to pay substitute teacher costs while day-to-day teachers are out of the classroom.

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY VOLUNTEERS OFFER SPRING CLEAN-UP. More than 20,000 orange-vested volunteers were out this last week, combing roadsides for trash in the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) Adopt-A-Highway Program for Spring 2003. Work done by the volunteers saves taxpayers millions of dollars annually in litter pick-up costs. Those traveling the highways are asked to show their appreciation to the volunteers by slowing down and using extra caution in areas where they are working. Additional Adopt-A-Highway trash pick-up dates are July 12-20 and September 13-21. For information on adopting a two-mile stretch of highway, visit the MDOT website at: www.michigan.gov/adoptahighway.

ASSISTANCE FOR LINEAR TRAIL MAINTENANCE SOLICITED. State recreation officials recently announced they are recruiting assistance to help maintain the five State Park Linear Trails, which constitute 174 miles of former railroad right-of-way now serving as Linear Trails throughout Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Unlike state parks, the linear trails are not supported by fees collected from Motor Vehicle Permits or camping fees. In light of the continued budget strain and personnel shortages at other state parks following last year's round of early retirements, Department of Natural Resources Parks and Recreation Bureau officials are seeking volunteer assistance to work with DNR staff to help maintain the trails. Picking up litter, clearing small limbs, raising funds to maintain vault toilets, and replacing washouts are among the tasks groups and individuals will be asked to perform. Interested parties are asked to contact the Parks and Recreation Bureau at (517) 373-9900 for information on locations of linear trails and how they may lend support.

THE STATE IS IN SEARCH OF THE 2003 HOLIDAY TREE. The State of Michigan and the Michigan Timberman's Association have announced their 17th annual holiday tree search. The tree that will stand in front of the Capitol this December must be a spruce or fir, must stand at least 65 feet tall, and have a crown diameter of no more than 30 feet and a trunk diameter of no more than 30 inches. It should also be relatively close to roads for trucks to transport it. Another very important requirement is that it also has to be free. Those wishing to participate in the program should contact the Department of Management and Budget at (517) 373-1004 for further details. Specifics about their tree and a photo are requested by June 15.

DID YOU KNOW? Missaukee County, located in Northern-lower Michigan, is considered by many to be the "unofficial" Christmas Tree capital of Michigan.